



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986

Press Release

August 25, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kim Pettry
304-558-2021

Jo-Clair Datson, Program Director, RSVP
304-448-2118 xt 231
fax: 304-448-3287

ATTORNEY GENERAL MCGRAW AWARDS \$50,000 TO THE COUNCIL OF THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS' RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS AMACHI PROGRAM.

Charleston - Attorney General Darrell McGraw today announced a \$50,000 award to be given to the Council of the Southern Mountains' Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for the implementation of its Amachi program. These funds are from the proceeds of settlements reached by the Attorney General's Office in actions against the pharmaceutical industry.

These funds are awarded for the implementation of a five-year demonstration program in McDowell, Wyoming and Raleigh Counties to mentor the at-risk children of incarcerated parents. This funding will launch the Amachi program which will match caring adults of good character to mentor to children who are at high risk for lower academic achievement, drug abuse, and incarceration because of the negative impact of having one or both parents in prison.

Presently in West Virginia, there are an estimated 34,000 children who have at least one parent who is either incarcerated or is in the custody of the State of West Virginia whether it is probation, home confinement, or alternative sentencing. Statistically, these children are at high risk for substance abuse, low academic achievement and incarceration as adults and as juveniles. Of the 34,000 children of incarcerated parents, an estimated 70% of these children will be incarcerated at some point in their lives.

The goal for the Amachi program will be to reduce the likelihood that the children of incarcerated parents will be locked in a cycle of low achievement and incarceration. "Programs such as this benefit not only the children it is intended to help but the community and citizens of West Virginia as well." McGraw stated. "Saving a child from the cycle of incarceration means not only a soul rescued, but it means one more productive citizen and one less person to house in state prisons and institutions."

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